MARVEL COMICS
3 OF 4
PUNISHER®
P.O.V.™
WHO WILL BE...
KING OF THE HILL?
STARLIN • WRIGHTSON • WRAY

PUNISHER P.O.V. POINT OF VIEW

BOOK THREE: INTRO-SPECTION

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STORY

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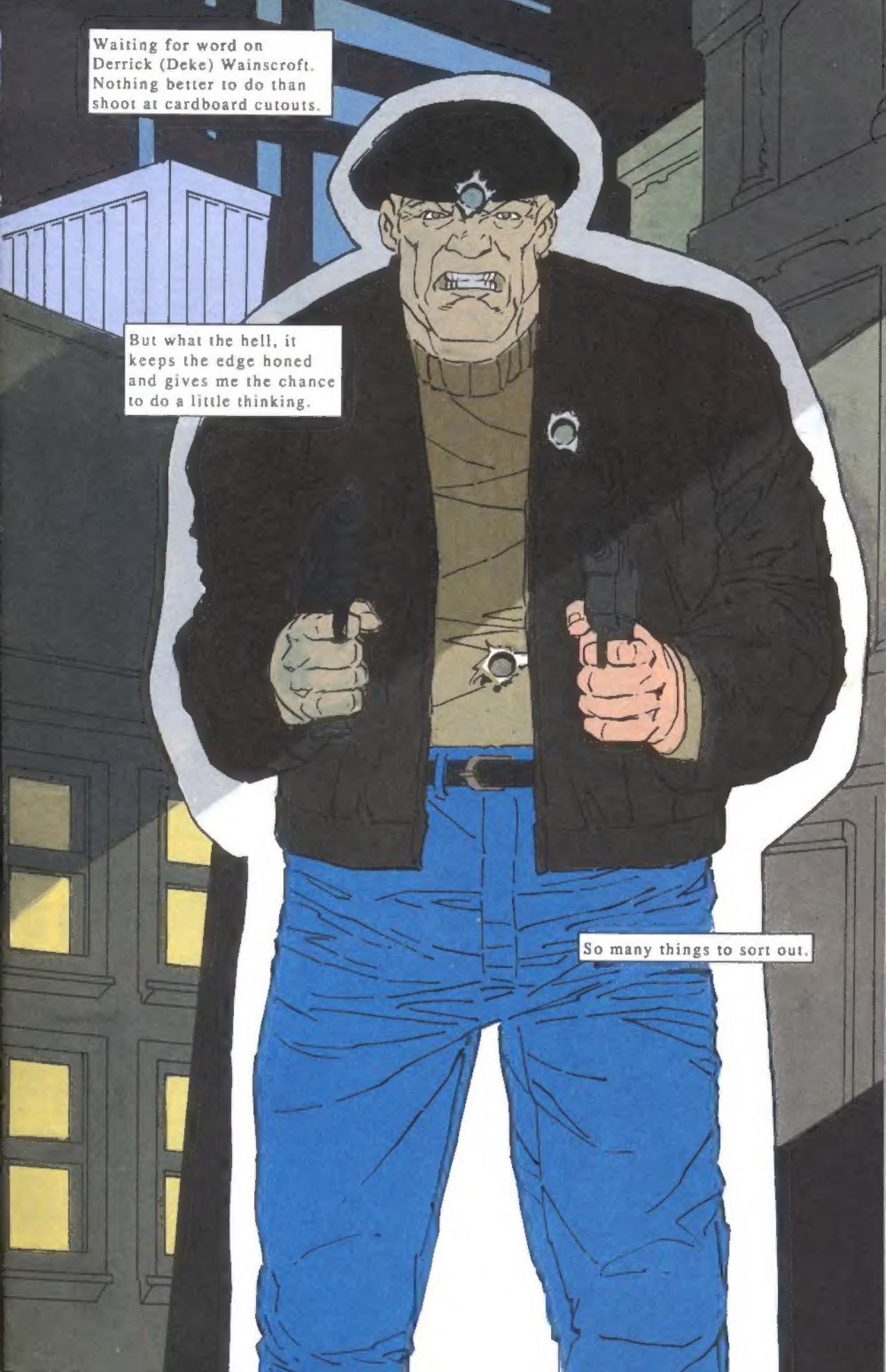
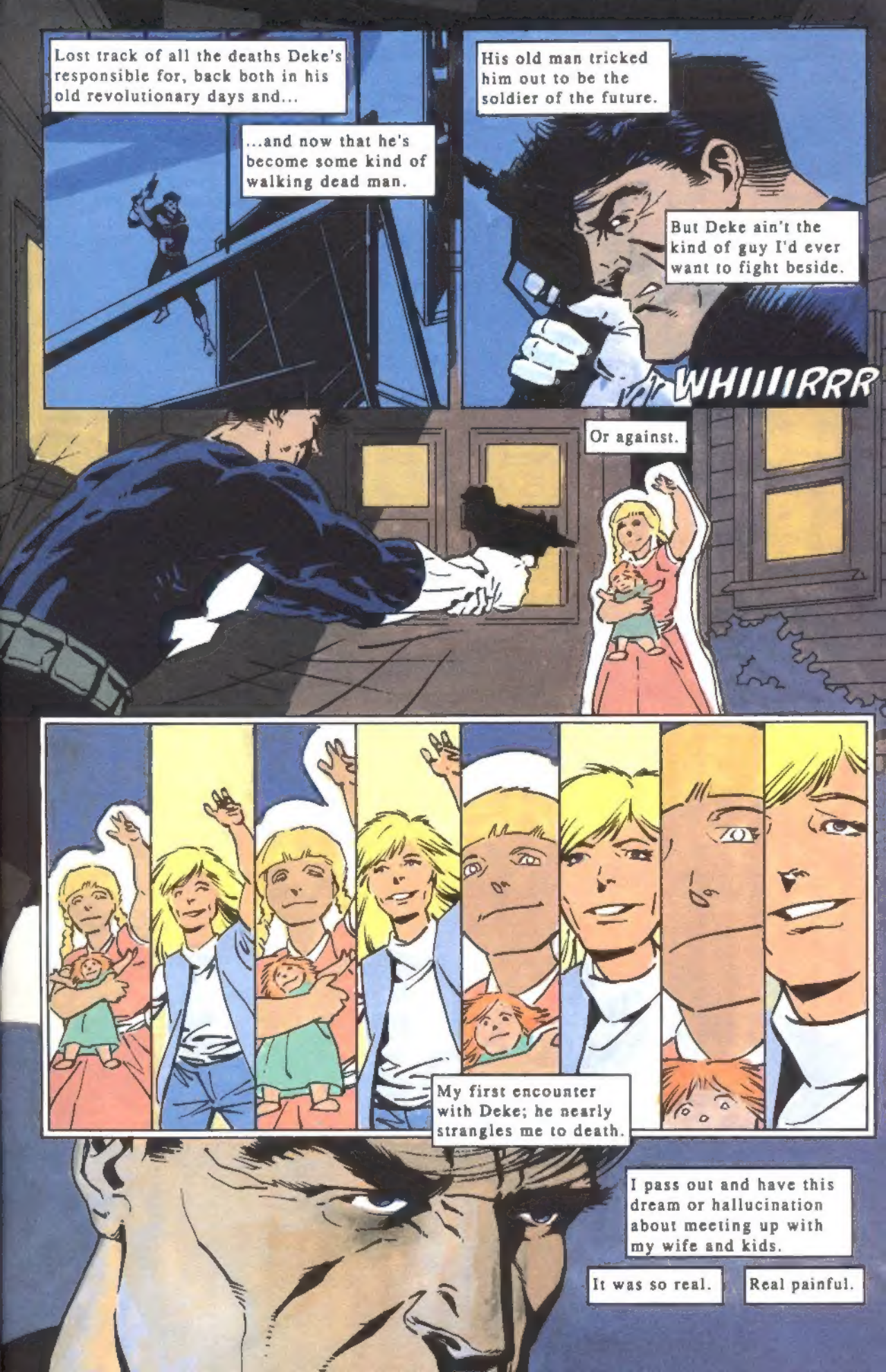
SPECIAL THANKS TO RUBEN DIAZ & GREGORY WRIGHT

COVER LOGO BY KEN LOPEZ

brak ocd


Waiting for word on Derrick (Deke) Wainscroft. Nothing better to do than shoot at cardboard cutouts.
But what the hell, it keeps the edge honed and gives me the chance to do a little thinking.
So many things to sort out.

Ol' Deke isn't like any killer I've ever gone after before.
Usually I shoot them and they fall down dead, but not Deke.
Shoot him, stab him, drop him off a thirty story building: nothing kills this guy.
It's unreal.
Seems Deke's been altered genetically so that nothing can off him.
WHIIIIIIRR
Leastways, that's the theory. Not sure I buy it.
Figure I'll take another crack at helping Deke over that great divide.
Figure he deserves the extra effort.


Lost track of all the deaths Deke's responsible for, back both in his old revolutionary days and...
...and now that he's become some kind of walking dead man.
His old man tricked him out to be the soldier of the future.
But Deke ain't the kind of guy I'd ever want to fight beside.
WHIIIIRRR
Or against.
My first encounter with Deke; he nearly strangles me to death.
I pass out and have this dream or hallucination about meeting up with my wife and kids.
It was so real.
Real painful.

I spoke with them, touched them, could smell them, and that's the strangest part.
My kids seemed more real to me than my wife did.
Something about that realization bothers me, but I don't know why.
It's like some voice inside is trying to clue me in on something my conscious mind's missing.
Which would be easy enough to do.
WHIIIRR
BBRD
TTTTT
This whole case has just gotten too complicated.

There's me, the police, the Kingpin's organization, Deke's own father, and now maybe even SHIELD.
SHIELD...Now there's a big unanswered question mark.
They haven't yet played any active hand in this little comedy of errors, but they will.
Just wish I'd get a line on Deke and bag him before anyone else shows up to muddy the waters further.
Don't like messing with Fury and his boys; they're too damn efficient.
MICROCHIP, HOW'S IT GOING?
GOT THE SCANNER HOOKED UP TO THE COMPUTER, MONITORING IT.
PROGRAMMED IT TO RED FLAG ANY REPORT WITH CERTAIN KEY WORDS IN THEM.
WHAT WORDS?
DEKE, DERRICK WAINSCROFT, SHIELD, VAMPIRE, BLOOD, MONSTER, AND UPS TRUCK.
GOT ANOTHER COMPUTER ACCESSING AND DOING THE SAME WITH EVERY COMPUTERIZED POLICE LOG IN THE STATE.
BUT HAVEN'T TURNED UP ANYTHING USEFUL SO FAR.
WELL, STICK WITH IT.
Where is he?
I hate waiting.

Hanging out, cooling my heels, in my New Jersey warehouse hideaway; I miss the beautiful sight of the sun setting over the Catskill Mountains.
Later on I find out Deke and his pal Zonkers don't.
HOW'S IT HANGING, MAN?
LONG DRIVE FROM THE BIG APPLE.
WASTED?
KINDA.
ME, I GOT A MEAN THIRST.
MAYBE WE CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT?

YEAH, BUT GOT TO PLAY IT COOL, MAN.
SEEMS LIKE EVERYONE IN THE WORLD IS AFTER MY TAIL.
THAT'S THE SIGN OF A GOOD REVOLUTIONARY, BRO.
NOTHING TO STRESS OUT ABOUT.
Saugerties is a quiet town right in the middle of the Catskills.
It's not the kind of place you'd expect to stumble upon heavy trouble.
But, reports indicate exactly what Officer Green found himself stepping in, without even realizing it.
HELP ME...
HUH?
LADY, WHAT HAPPENED?
HE WAS... A MONSTER... JUMPED OUT OF THE SHADOWS...
I... COULDN'T STOP HIM... SUCKED BLOOD ... FROM MY WRIST...
HE WAS... A VAMPIRE...
YOU'RE OKAY NOW, LADY.
Later, back at Green's station house...
WHAT YOU GOT THERE, GREENIE?
A BULLETIN FROM THE NYPD.

THEY GOT AN APB OUT ON A DERRICK WAINSCROFT, A.K.A. DEKE WAINSCROFT, A.K.A. THE VAMPIRE KILLER.
SOUNDS FAMILIAR.
THINK I'LL GIVE THEM A CALL ON IT.
...AND FROM WHAT THIS OFFICER GREEN TELLS ME, CAPTAIN, IT SOUNDS LIKE OUR BIRD HAS COME TO ROOST UP IN THE MOUNTAINS.
THANK YOU FOR KEEPING ME UPDATED ON THE SITUATION, DET. HOLIDAY.
THAT PACKAGE YOU ASKED ABOUT HAS SHOWN UP IN A SMALL UPSTATE TOWN.
HAVE YOU A SPECIFIC ADDRESS?
SORRY. JUST SOMEWHERE IN SAUGERTIES.
I SUPPOSE THAT WILL HAVE TO DO.
THERE WILL BE A LITTLE SOMETHING IN THE MAIL FOR YOU, CAPTAIN.
A SMALL TOKEN OF MY APPRECIATION.
GLAD TO BE OF SERVICE TO YOU ANYTIME, MR. FISK.
THE TAP ON THE KINGPIN'S PHONE PAYS OFF.
I WANT ANOTHER TACTICAL SQUAD PUT TOGETHER, AND...
"...HAVE SOMEONE CONTACT THE NEW YORK STATE POLICE."
FRANK, I THINK I GOT SOMETHING HERE.

AN ASSAULT IN SAUGERTIES WITH DEKE'S MO.
SAUGERTIES? WHAT'S DEKE DOING UP IN THE MOUNTAINS?
SAUGERTIES TAX RECORDS SHOW DAEMIAN WAINSCROFT HAS A SUMMER HOME THERE
HOW ABOUT AN ADDRESS?
HERE YOU GO
About three hours later
HOW MUCH FARTHER?
GOT TO BE LESS THAN A MILE ACCORDING TO THIS MAP THE MAN PROVIDED
SOMETHING IN THE ROAD UP AHEAD.
... WHAT THE HELL?
CASTLE
THAT YOU, CHIEF?

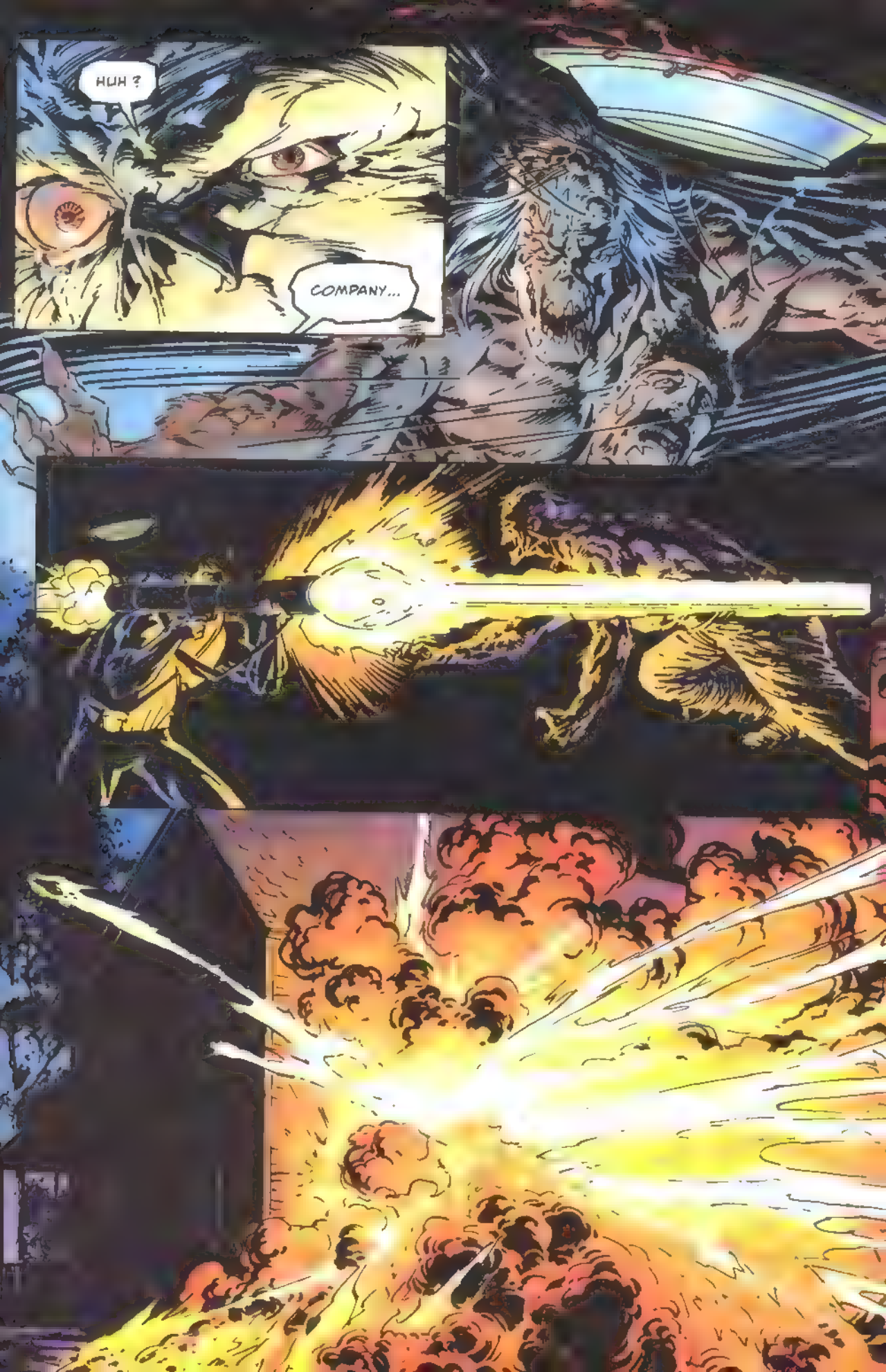
YEAH.
WHAT'S UP?
GOING IN AFTER DEKE AND I DON'T WANT ANYONE GETTING IN MY WAY.
ANY OBJECTIONS?
NO.
BUT IF YOU CAN'T HACK IT...?
THEN IT'LL BE YOUR TURN TO CUT IN
DEAL
LATER, THEN

LUKE, GET THE BOYS OUT OF THE BACK OF THE VAN AND READY THEM FOR SOME HEAVY ACTION.
MIGHT BE PARTY TIME.
Back in the Big Apple, certain things were going down directly related to my Catskill hunt.
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL...
... HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
I'D LIKE TO KNOW IF MRS. CAROL NELSON HAS CHECKED IN YET
ARE YOU A RELATIVE OF MRS. NELSON'S?
YES, HER HUSBAND
DR. HUGHES SIGNED YOUR WIFE IN EARLY THIS AFTERNOON FOR FURTHER TESTING, MR NELSON
THANK YOU...

I'LL BE RIGHT OVER
It s a quiet little getaway, the kind of place an overworked executive would come to relax
Not a refuge for a monster
But Deke's here, all right
And I got a Belgian rocket launcher to blow ol' Deke into a million pieces
If that don't finish him I'll bake him with the flame thrower
One way or the other, I m killing Deke tonight

Voices coming from inside
One of them's Deke
Can't place the other
Whoever it is is in for a hard night
Tough, anyone hanging around with Deke probably deserves whatever they get
WHAT THE .

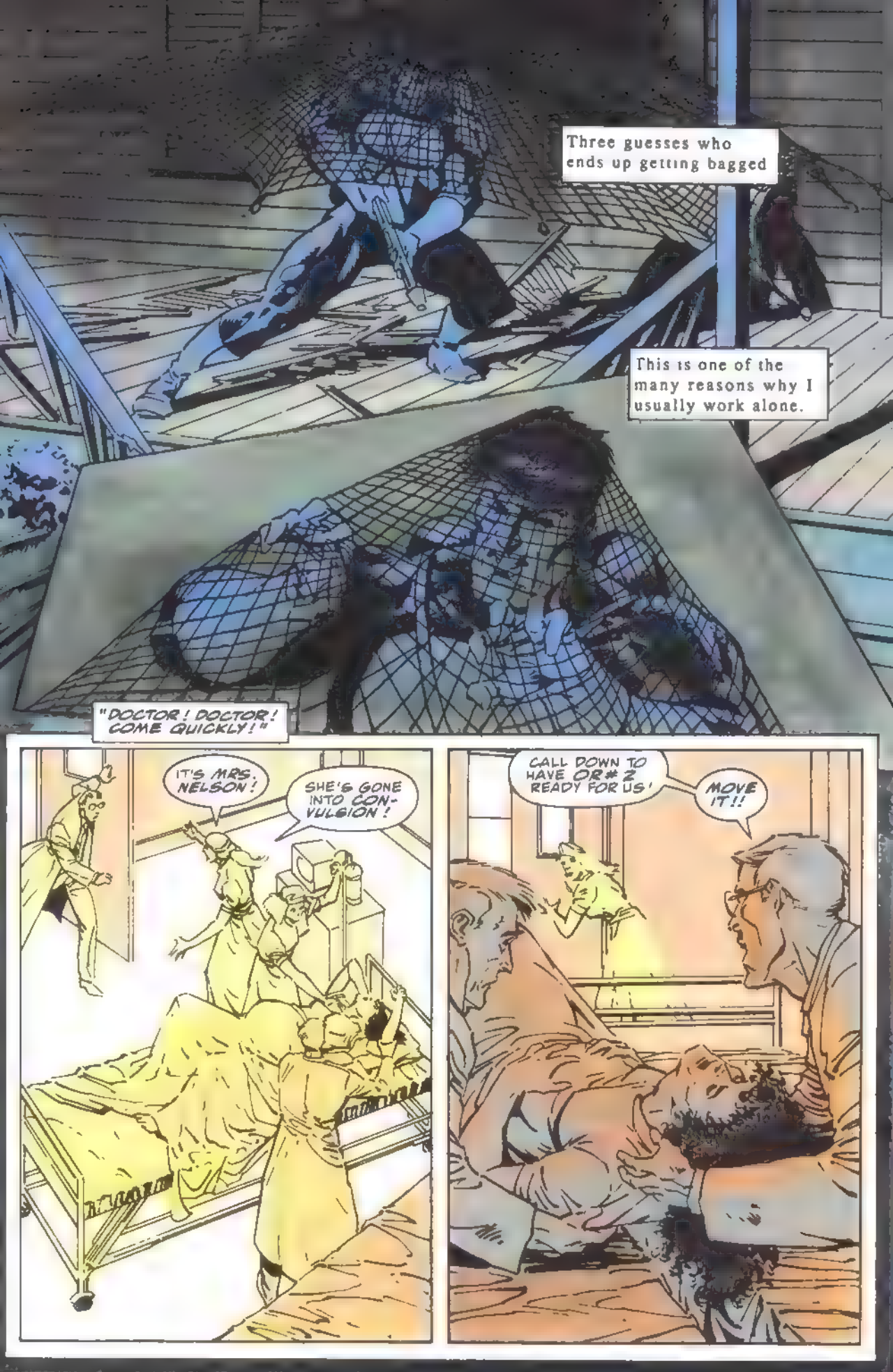
POWER TO THE PEOPLE..
...FAR OUT, MAN...
...GROOVY...
...DRINK... DRINK..


HUH ?
COMPANY...

LET'S GO BOYS.
THE PUNISHER'S BLOWN

Memorial Hospital
BUT, DR HUGHES .. I I FEEL .. REALLY AWFUL
I NEVER DREAMT HAVING A BABY WOULD BE ANYTHING LIKE THIS
I WOULD HAVE NEVER
RELAX, MRS. NELSON. THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT
WE JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT YOUR TEST RESULTS INDICATE AND THEN ...
AND THEN WE'LL SEE
HOW'S THE LADY, DOC?
FINE
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR
TOOK US A LONG TIME TO LOCATE HER IN ORDER TO PROTECT HER FROM THE CRAZY AFTER HER
UH-HUH
HATE TO SEE ANYTHING ELSE GO WRONG FOR HER NOW THAT SHE'S SAFE FROM THAT LUNATIC.
THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT HER...
"... SHE'S RECEIVING THE BEST CARE AVAILABLE."
Death staring me in the face

As always, I treat it with the proper respect it deserves.
Then the unexpected company shows up.
Guess the Chief figured I'd blown it.
LOOK OUT!
GET OUT OF THE WAY!
The net gun's a pretty good idea; probably the Chief s
Only trouble is he puts it in the hands of a real beef jerky.


Three guesses who ends up getting bagged
This is one of the many reasons why I usually work alone.
"DOCTOR! DOCTOR! COME QUICKLY!"
IT'S MRS. NELSON!
SHE'S GONE INTO CON-VULGION!
CALL DOWN TO HAVE OR#2 READY FOR US!
MOVE IT!!

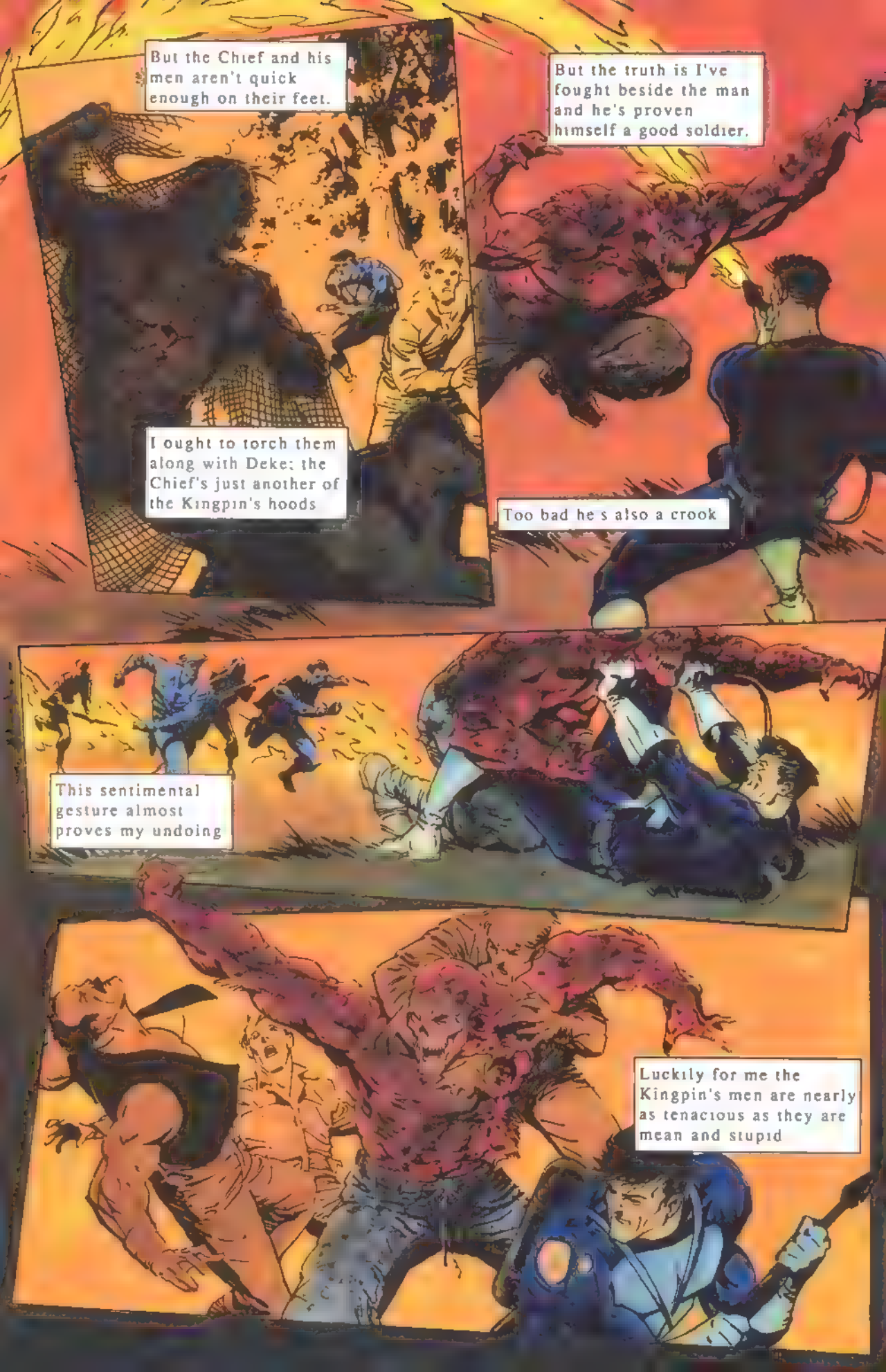
Meanwhile back up in the mountains, things were going from bad to worse.
GET ME OUT OF THIS DAMN THING!!
HANG IN THERE, CASTLE!
I'M CUTTING AS FAST AS I CAN
GREAT GOING, CHIEF
HEY, I THOUGHT THE NET GUN WOULD DO THE TRICK
IT WOULD HAVE IF YOU HADN'T GIVEN IT TO AN IDIOT TO USE!
THINK YOU CAN DO ANY BETTER?
LOADS!
BE MY GUEST

WHO'S CARRYING THE EXTRA CHARGES FOR THIS?
HE S
I have tracked down the devel woman
Nothing will stand in the way of me Fulfilling my destiney and completing my wholly mission.
Noth ng!
EMORIAL
SPITAL
NOTHING!

Now I'm ready to bag me a monster.
That is if I can get a clear shot at him
GET YOUR TAILS OUT OF THE WAY, YOU DAMN FOOLS!
This time the Kingpin's men hear and listen.
But then so does Deke.
Not that it does him any good though.

WE GOT HIM!
WE GOT HIM!
I'M LOSING HER!
DROP IN BLOOD PRESSURE
NOT RESPONDING
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE
MASSIVE BLOOD LOSS
MORE UNITS OF BLOOD
CARDIAC IRREGULARITIES INCREASING

SHE S GONE
WE LOST HER
BUT IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.
ALL HER TESTS CAME BACK NEGATIVE
THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG W TH HER
DOCTOR, WHAT NOW?
I'M GOING N
MAYBE WE CAN SAVE THE BABY.
CHIEF, BACK OFF!
IT'S TIME TO BARBECUE THIS SUCKER!
FRIED GEEK, MY FAVOR TE

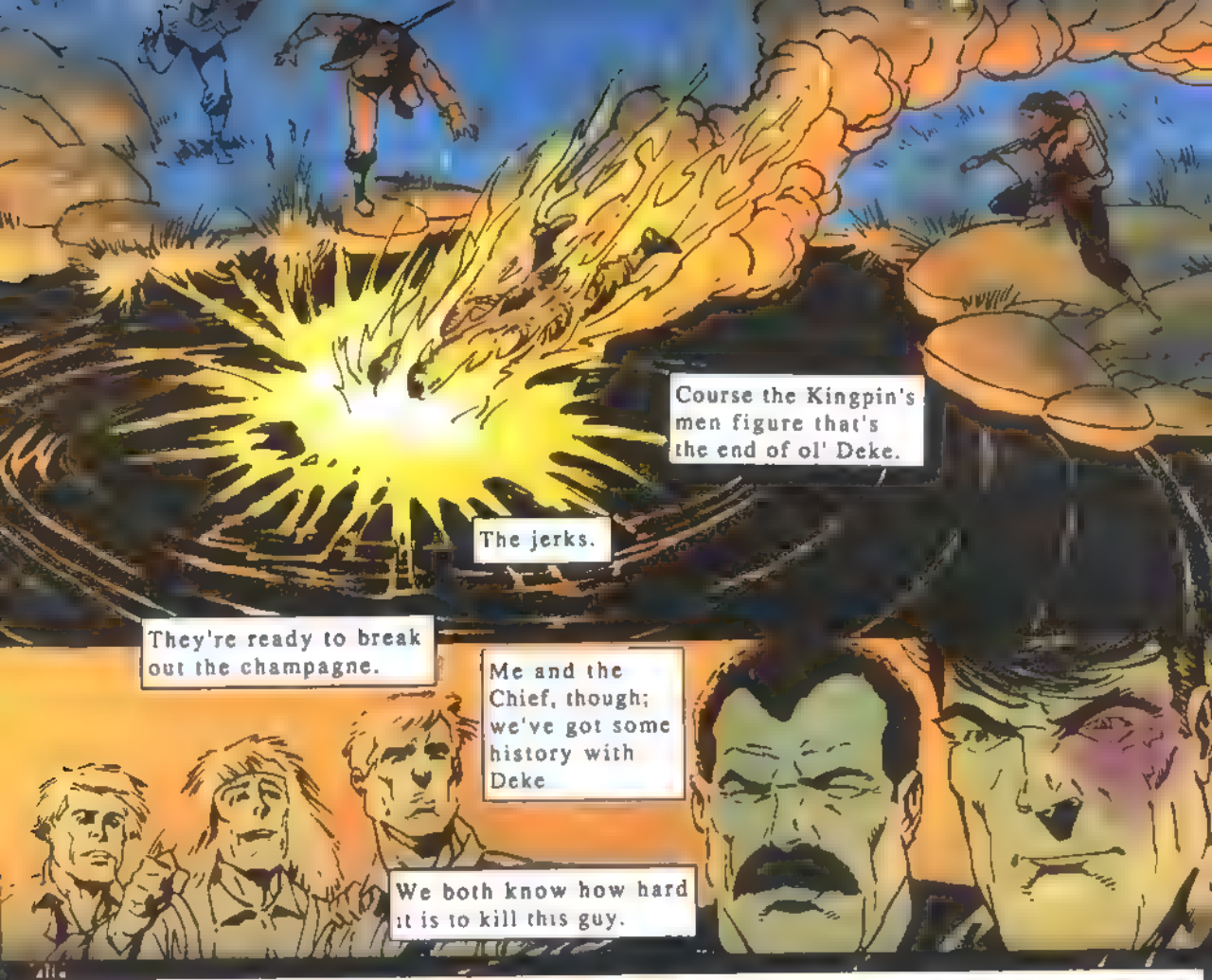

But the Chief and his men aren't quick enough on their feet.
But the truth is I've fought beside the man and he's proven himself a good soldier.
I ought to torch them along with Deke: the Chief's just another of the Kingpin's hoods
Too bad he s also a crook
This sentimental gesture almost proves my undoing
Luckily for me the Kingpin's men are nearly as tenacious as they are mean and stupid

ALL RIGHT, YOU LOWLIFES! CLEAR AWAY FROM DEKE OR BE FRIED ALONG WITH HIM!
Why do they always have to make these places so big?
I'll never find pediatrics!
SAY, MISTER...
YOU LOST?
CAN I HELP YOU?

MONSTERS everywhere!
WHERE'S YOUR DAMN PEDIATRICS?!
THAT WAY!
I am comin for you, demon slut!
Nothin shall stay my hand!
One tug on my finger and Deke becomes a human torch.
But I hold off on charbroiling the murderous bastard.

I want him to know it's coming
HEY, DEKE!
DEKE!
DO ME A FAVOR, WILL YOU?
HUH?
WHEN YOU GET TO HELL, SAY HELLO TO ZONKERS FOR ME!

Once again Deke surprises me. I figured one good blast would fix his wagon
Didn't expect him to be capable of rabbiting.
Then it hits me that it's not blind panic guiding Deke's feet.
The S.O.B knows exactly where he's heading
I give it my best shot, but it's terribly obvious that once again it's just going to be too little too late


Course the Kingpin's men figure that's the end of ol' Deke.
The jerks.
They're ready to break out the champagne.
Me and the Chief, though; we've got some history with Deke
We both know how hard it is to kill this guy.

Twice before I've gone head to head with Deke Wainscroft
He's survived both encounters That's unusual.
So what makes me think this time will be any different?
Blind faith and vanity, maybe.

Wrong again
WHAT'S IT GOING TO TAKE TO KEEP THIS CREEP DOWN?
DAMN..
I should have brought a chainsaw along
I'M ABOUT TO ENTER THE WOMB.
IS THAT INCUBATOR READY?
YES, DOCTOR.

WELL, HERE GOES
IT'S A NICE CLEAN INCISION, AND...
HUH?
AGGCH!!
OR 2
AAAAAIIIIIIIIEEEEEEEEEEEE
Yeah, I know bullets won't stop Deke

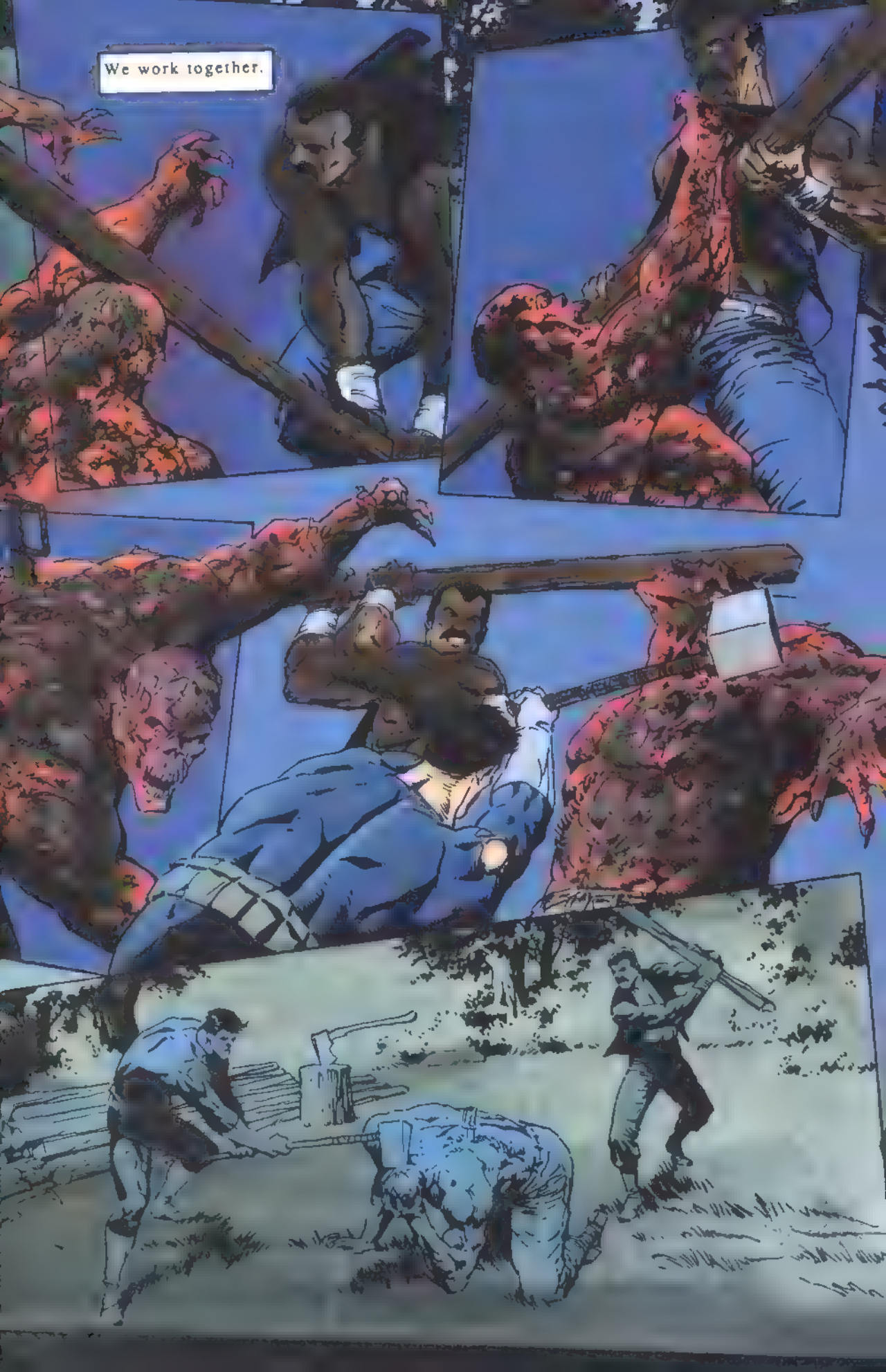
But I join in with the firing squad routine, hoping it'll buy me time to think of a better route to go
Another of the Kingpin's goons buys it in an exceptionally bad way
Deke's idea of getting creative
It's a bit more than the hired help can handle
Some call it the better part of valor

It leaves the Chief and me facing a walking nightmare out of hell with nothing but a couple of pig stickers
Everybody's freeked, running down the halls in panick
Gotta be the monsters doing.
Cant get thru all these stupid scared people!
Th ng is gonna get away!
I m gonna be too late!
TOO LATE!
My brain's going about 80 miles per hour, trying to figure a way to do in Deke
Looking around for something extra lethal to try

I mean it's not like I have to worry about getting killed myself.
If I'm really careful, I could keep playing tag with Deke all night long.
But what I want to do is kill the guy and I just can't seem to come up with a solution to that problem
Then my eyes fall on a nearby woodpile
And I remember my battle with Deke on the unfinished skyscraper
In desperation I hit the walking terror in the head with a pipe.
I smacked him hard enough to kill six men
But I didn't kill him, only stunned him

But it did stun him!
The brain!!
CHIEF, WE'VE GOT TO KILL THE BRAIN!
HOW?
MAYBE LIKE THIS!

The way I see it is Deke's been genetically altered so that his body instantly repairs almost any damage done to it
But I also believe that everything has its limits, even miracles
Sure, maybe Deke could survive brain damage and come back swinging.
But how many times and how often can he pull off that magic trick?
Hopefully the Chief's pugnacious temperament will save me from going to that extreme
I'm going to find out the answer to that question or die trying
The man could easily be mistaken for a pit bull


We work together.

KEEP HIM DOWN THERE, CHIEF!
I WANT TO SEE HOW DEKE TAKES TO BEING SEPARATED FROM HIS HEAD!
NOT VERY WELL I'LL WAGER
SAY GOOD NIGHT GRACIE
FREEZE!
PUNISHER, THIS IS NICK FURY!
PUT DOWN THE AXE AND STEP AWAY FROM DERRICK WAINSCROFT!
FURY T FIGURES

If SHIELD takes Deke in, all the deaths and trouble will be for nothing. Fury can't possibly realize what a monster he's dealing with here
Deke will eventually escape and the killing will start all over again. I can't let that happen.
But maybe one good swipe from the axe might behead Deke and solve everyone's problems. Maybe
KA-THUT!
GOOD SHOT WITH THAT STUN GUN, PIERCE.
COULDN'T'VE DONE BETTER MYSELF
WAINSCROFT, GET THAT SPECIAL HARNESS OVER HERE AND ON YOUR BOY
YOU BETTER BE RIGHT ABOUT IT BEING ABLE TO HOLD HIM

OR 2
STAIRS

The Devel CHILD has escaped into the SEWERS!
i MUST FOLLOW!
SORRY, CASTLE
COULDN'T LET YOU GO DESTROYING VALUABLE GOVERNMENT PROPERTY.
FURY, YOU'VE NO IDEA WHAT KIND OF A NIGHTMARE YOU LET LIVE.
YOU'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO HOLD IT.
WANNA BET SOME MONEY ON THAT?
THOSE MANACLES WERE DESIGNED BY WAINSCROFT SENIOR HIMSELF, A VIBRATIUM/TITANIUM STEEL ALLOY.
BLASTED THINGS COULD HOLD A DINOSAUR IN CHECK

BUT THAT AIN'T NO EXTINCT CREATURE OVER THERE, FURY
THAT'S THE LIVING PROTOTYPE OF WHAT THEY PLAN THE SOLDIER OF THE FUTURE TO BE LIKE
THAT'S WHAT THEY WANT TO SEND AGAINST GOOD FIGHTING MEN.
KILL IT, FURY!
DESTROY IT IF YOU GET THE CHANCE!
I'M BEGGING YOU!
NO CAN DO, CASTLE.
WAINSCROFT AND HIS SON HAVE BECOME AN INTRINSIC PART OF THIS NATION'S STRATEGIC DEFENSE POLICY.
THAT'S HYPOCRITICAL BULL, FURY!
DEKE'S A STONE-COLD KILLING MACHINE, NO LONGER EVEN VAGUELY HUMAN!
AND HIS OLD MAN AIN'T MUCH BETTER. WAS HIM THAT MADE DEKE THE WAY HE IS!
THERE'S NO TELLING HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE DIED BECAUSE OF THE TWO OF THEM!
NO DENYING THEY'RE SCUM, ALL RIGHT
BUT I'D DEAL WITH THE DEVIL HIMSELF IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES TO PROTECT THIS GREAT COUNTRY OF OURS
FURY
CAPT. BAKER OF THE STATE POLICE
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, CAPTAIN?

YOU CAN TURN CUSTODY OF THE PUNISHER OVER TO US.
WE'VE GOT A GOOD DOZEN WARRANTS OUTSTANDING ON THAT JOKER
THEN HE'S ALL YOURS.
WHAT ABOUT THE CHIEF HERE?
GOT NOTHING ON HIM
THEN CUT HIM LOOSE AND SEND HIM HOME
BE SEEING YOU AROUND SOMETIME CASTLE
CHIEF
YEAH?
YOU'RE BASICALLY A GOOD MAN I'M PROUD TO HAVE FOUGHT AT YOUR SIDE
YOU CAN DO BETTER FOR YOURSELF THAN THE KINGPIN.
YEAH BEEN THINKING THE SAME THING MYSELF GOT NO CONVICTIONS ON MY RAP SHEET YET
DO ANYTHING I WANT MIGHT GO SEE WHAT CALIFORNIA'S GOT TO OFFER
GOOD LUCK, MAN
SOUNDS LIKE A SLICK COMING IN
THAT'S YOUR TRANSPORTATION TO RYKERS, TOUGH GUY
YOU'RE ABOUT TO TAKE THE BIG FALL, HOTSHOT
MOVE IT, SLIMEBALL

REALLY THINK THAT BOZO WILL BE ABLE TO HOLD THE PUNISHER?
NOT A CHANCE.
BUT IT'LL KEEP HIM OUT OF OUR HAIR FOR A WHILE.

CAREFUL NOW...
QUIET, YOU FOOL!
RADIOL
134 - 162
NOW LET ME JUST GET A LITTLE LOOK-SEE AND...
NOTHING.
THIS HALL'S ALL CLEAR, BOYS.
STAIRS
GOT A BLOOD TRAIL HERE.
GOES INTO THE OR.
PLACE STINKS LIKE A GAS STATION BATHROOM.
I'LL CHECK IT OUT.
RIGHT BEHIND YOU.
I KNOW; THAT'S WHAT WORRIES ME.
OMIGAWD...

WHAT THE HELL ARE WE DEALING WITH HERE NOW?
FIND OUT IN NEXT MONTH'S STUNNING CONCLUSION!

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